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SECURITY INFORMATION

COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

TOPIC Mechanik-Askania VEB, Berlin-TeltowEVALUATION                      PLACE OBTAINED                      25X1DATE OF CONTENT                     DATE OBTAINED                      DATE PREPARED 20 March 1953REFERENCES                     PAGES 6 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)                     REMARKS                      The following report is reproduced as received 25X1This is UNEVALUATED Information 25X1

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1. The Werk Askania VEB (Askania Works, nationalized plant) was located on Oder Strasse, Berlin-Teltow, between the Teltow canal and Potsdamer Chaussee, west of the Warthebruecke (Warthe Bridge) on the site of the former Heinrich List plant.
2. In late 1945, a succession plant, Elektro-Feinbau GmbH., Teltow, (Electrical Precision Works, Ltd.) was established in the factory building, previously owned by Heinrich List, Graduate Engineer. The new plant manufactured ash trays and similar items from refuse matter and, later, made loudspeakers and radio dials. By Soviet order, List-model shaking and impact test stands, such as those produced during the war, generally for the German aviation service, were built in early 1946. It was possible to redesign the drawings for these items.
3. In early 1946, the principal firm, Askania Werke, Bamberg Werk AG., Berlin-Friedenau Inc., formerly on Kaiser Allee, now Bundes Allee, in the U.S.Sector, set up a branch factory in Teltow under the name of Askania Feinmechanik and Optik GmbH. (Askania, Precision Mechanics and Optics, Ltd.) in the rooms of the former Heinrich List Works. This new branch factory worked for the Russians and was scheduled to execute the major part of the Askania program. It produced, principally, jet pipe regulators according to the Askania oilaulic jet pipe principle. The designing office was to draft specifications for the designs and manufacture of copies to be built in the USSR.
4. When a suit was filed against the management of the principal Askania firm in Friedenau on the charge of supplying the Russians with cine-theodolites, regarded as war material, the Teltow Askania plant was expropriated and placed under national administration. Since the electrical precision works, located in the same building, had also been nationalized, the two factories were merged. After numerous changes, the combined factories were finally given the name of Mechanik-Askania-Teltow VEB.
5. The Elektro-Feinbau GmbH. was under the management of Director Kunze (fnu) who lived in Berlin-Zehlendorf, U.S.Sector. When the plant was nationalized, the managing engineer Grad.Eng.Jeske (fnu), who lived in Berlin-Wedding, French Sector, was appointed trustee. The Askania Precision Mechanics and Optics Branch was managed by Rudolf Mueller, Dr.Eng., in behalf of the principal firm. Mueller retained this position when the administration was

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nationalized and after this branch was merged with the electrical precision works. He and Jeske who was made Commercial Manager after the merger

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6. When the plant was nationalized, it was subordinated to the Brandenburg Government in Potsdam (Ministerialrat Mueller (fnu) ), and, when the nationalized plants were incorporated into zonal associations, they were attached to the VVB Mechanic in Dresden. In early 1952, the zonal associations were reorganized with the small plants, previously handled by the Laender-Administration, and the larger plants placed under direct control of the Special Ministries in East Germany. The Mechanik-Askania was controlled by the Main Administration of the Ministry of Engineering (Minister Tiller (fnu) ). Chemnitz (fnu), an SED member, was the chief administrator. Although not from the precision mechanics or optical industry, he was quite popular as supervisor and administration official. Engineer Heinz Boehmer (SED) was chief supervisor with Askania until 1950 and, because of his political activity, was made Manager of Askania in the fall of 1950 as successor to Dr. Mueller. He was transferred to the Ministry as Technical Manager in 1951. In September 1952, he was retransferred to Askania as operating engineer in charge of certain workshops. Engineer Gueldenpfennig (fnu) and Engineer Harms (fnu) were advisors at the Main Administration and responsible for the Askania firm. Although they were not SED members and encountered certain political difficulties they managed to retain their posts. Engineer Albrecht (fnu) was responsible for developing work.
7. In mid-1952, the geographical workshops in Brieselang were attached to Mechanik-Askania VEB under the management of Engineer Mueller. The workshops were a Russian establishment and had been set up as a developing plant for seismic instruments; they were later placed under the administration of the Geological Commission as a nationalized plant. In late 1952, a second branch factory in Treuenbrietzen was scheduled to be attached. This plant was the former Dr. Kroeber and Son firm, manufacturers of thermic instruments and fittings, which was nationalized and scheduled to be attached to the VVB in Dresden and, later, to Askania. There was also a branch factory on Wasser Strasse, Stralsund, with a nautical instruments depot headed by Engineer Mutulla (fnu).

8. The personnel of Mechanik-Askania VEB in Teltow included: Plant Manager Josef Triebe.

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Technical Manager: Karl von Hedt.

Commercial Manager: Zoebel (fnu)

Personnel Chief: Fey (fnu)

Cultural Manager: Koechling (fnu).

Planning Manager: Woithe (fnu),

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Labor Manager: Emil Leither,

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Production Chief: Kaeding (fnu),

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Operating Manager: Raether (fnu),

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Chief Designer: Engineer Max Rancke,

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Chief of Designing Office I: Engineer Max Schulze,

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Chief of Developing Section I (for oscillation engineering, nautical and oceanographical instruments, geophysics research): Dr. Wilhelm (fnu),

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Chief of Designing Office II (for regulators) : Engineer Gerhard Gladbach,

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Chief of Developing Section II (for regulators): Wolfgang Britall,

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Quality Inspection Chief: Engineer Weigert (fnu),

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Chief Bookkeeper: Karminsky (fnu),

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President of the Work Committee: Frau Roll (fnu),

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The SED work group was headed by Fritz Walter who later was assigned another post presumably with the police.

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Assistant members of the developing sections were: Wilhelm Hornauer, Grad. Eng.,

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Another assistant was Regierungsbaumeister Emil Hahnebut,

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Grad. Eng.,

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Kurt Lehmann, Grad. Eng.,

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Erhard Rotter, Grad. Eng.,

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Adolf (fnu), Grad. Eng.,

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Mueller (fnu), Grad. Eng.,

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Wendt (fnu), Eng., about

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Valentin Ferber, Eng.,

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Independent scientific collaborators included:  
 Professor Rudolf Liebold,

Professor Dr. Gerhard Fanslau, professor of Geophysics at Humboldt University in Berlin,

Dr. Gramatzki (fnu), proprietor of a private astronomical observatory in Klein-Machnow, no party affiliation,

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9. About 2 years ago, labor personnel totalled 600 persons; this figure rose to about 1,300 persons in August 1952. About 150 persons were employed in the administrative section, purchase, sales, preliminary drafting, designing, and developing offices. A total of 150 apprentices were trained in the apprentices' workshop and at the apprentices' boarding school Schulzendorf attached to Askania. Skilled men, mechanics and mechanical workers, worked in the workshops, while skilled women worked on the assembly of water counters and nautical instruments. Work was generally done in one shift; there were two or three shifts, however, in one or the other of the mechanical workshops. Fairly high morale was maintained among the workers, most of whom worked on an efficiency wage basis; this, however, had no favorable effect on the quality of the instruments produced. Workers who did not work on an efficiency wage basis received a share in the bonus system in order to induce the greatest effort since only the best workers received bonuses. Quarterly bonuses were distributed on the condition that the plant had fulfilled its quota. Bonuses, carefully scaled, were granted to workmen not entitled to efficiency wages and to key employees and masters. Considerable anger and envy resulted from this system since only about 20 percent of the workmen in each workshop participated and, particularly, since political activity yielded many points and party members were always given preference. Acts of sabotage were rare. A few incidents occurred with respect to non-ferrous metals which the work management called sabotage. There were no strikes, but whole groups, especially the tool-makers group, did not report for work on certain church holidays, although the labor force, at the suggestion of the SED work group, had unanimously decided to "work for plan fulfillment" on those holidays.
10. Each machine had individual electrical drive and received electric current from the local electric mains. Gas too, was used for heat treatment of material. Work was frequently done at night because a high percentage of the electric energy had to be supplied at that time. Large consumers of energy, such as electric annealing and drying furnaces, could be switched on only at night. Exceptions to this rule were granted by the "energy commissioner" only in urgent cases. Liquid fuel was not used. Coal, generally lignite briquettes, was used for heating purposes; wood was used occasionally. The briquettes were usually dumped in the open even during the hot season since winter supplies were poor and it was necessary to store during the summer. During the past few years, no interruption of the heating, and only occasional interruption of the current supply, was experienced at the plant. This was in contrast to the civilian supply which was frequently cut off.
11. Shortage of raw materials was the most serious bottleneck at the plant. Non-ferrous metals could only be obtained for particularly important reparations orders and only through the ministerial quarters concerned. Gray casting, particularly steel castings, were also in very short supply. It was sometimes difficult to book orders because copper-brass alloys frequently had to be replaced with light metal. The most acute shortages were of spring steel and tool steel. It was necessary to procure spring steel from the West and western currency could be obtained only through the ministries and with a considerable loss of time. There was also a serious shortage of high-grade

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materials, for example, material for magnetic compasses and earth magnetic precision scales. Such high-grade magnets could only be obtained [redacted] and, in many cases, only on the black market.

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Recently, however, the "Entwicklung und Fabrikation elektrotechnischer Messgeraete" (Development and Manufacture of Electro-technical Measuring Instruments) (EFEM) in Berlin-Oberschoeneweide had manufactured high-grade magnets, although only in small quantities. Work Hero Stanek (fnu), Grad. Eng., was in charge of the EFEM. No material, such as Invar-steel spring bands, with special resisting qualities to changes in temperature, was manufactured in East Germany. Since the material needed was light weight, it was possible to buy sufficient quantities in the black market [redacted]

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[redacted] Plain converter plates, needed for magnetic amplifiers, could recently be obtained in East Germany. The quality of such material, especially of rolled products, improved greatly during the last period, but gray castings were varying in quality.

Elastics, used for numerous purposes, proved satisfactory with the exception of certain special materials. For example, material expected to have particular alcohol-resistant qualities, left much to be desired. Objects displayed in exhibitions were coated with varnish [redacted]

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12. After the war, operation at the plant began in entirely empty rooms and machine tools with which to work were received from nearby plants as large orders on reparations accounts had to be executed. Some new machines were later acquired, but, on the whole, the number of machines for precision-work manufacture was still insufficient. Mechanical equipment was continually improved. Special toolings and large pieces had to be manufactured by other plants since this plant had no foundry of its own.
13. Monthly production of the plant was valued at 1,200,000 eastmarks but this figure was not always reached. The following was produced:

In the oscillation engineering field:

A shaking test stand for test bodies up to 15 kilograms and a frequency of between 20 and 80 cycles; a shaking test stand for test bodies up to 15 kilograms and a frequency of between 80 and 300 cycles as series production, and a test stand for test bodies up to 5 kilograms and a frequency of between 20 and 600 kilograms, a new development; a scratch series of 30 in number (almost exclusively for the USSR); shaking test stands for test bodies up to 50 kilograms; special shaking test for high and low temperature (also almost exclusively for the USSR). Balancing machines for bodies up to 50 kilograms and up to 500 kilograms, as serial production, and balancing machines for balancing bodies up to 5 kilograms as a development and scratch series. All the apparatus were scheduled for export to the USSR and the satellite states. A special balancing machine for automatic elimination of out-of-balance properties was being developed as an order of the SAG Transmasch, Leipzig. These machines were individual rakes for the Bergmann-Borsig firm of Wilhelmshagen, LEW Hennigsdorf, for delivery to the USSR and Czechoslovakia.

Nautical instruments and ship fitting items:

Liquid compasses with card diameters of 75-mm, 125-mm, and 200-mm as running series for reparations, export and East German ships; photomagnetic compass developed in collaboration with the Freiburger Praezisionsmechanik VEB (Freiberg Precision Mechanics, nationalized plant) in Freiberg, Saxony, and the RFT Funkwerk-Koepenick, by order of the Bureau fuer Wirtschaftsfragen (Office for Economic Problems); a gyrocompass developed at the Funkwerk-Koepenick which closely resembled the former Anschuetz compasses and for which definite orders were expected to be placed with Askania by the ministry; engine room telegraph apparatus scheduled to be manufactured as running series production; patent logs with electric repeaters as running series, and running series production of clear view screens, inclinometers, and mechanical sounding machines.

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Oceanographical instruments:

Hydrographic current meters, deep-sea gauges, and deep-sea thermometers, to be manufactured as prototypes or in small series for Russian and German requirements.

Geophysical instruments:

Earth-magnetic precision scales after Dr. Farselau for horizontal and vertical components as series production for exportation (Chinese and German requirements), and gravimeters which were being developed.

Regulators:

Jet tube regulators, regulator control boards for electric power stations, and float regulators for locomotives, ect., in running series production; special regulators, such as aerometers for chemical industries and electrical regulators or additional electrical instruments for jet tube regulators and control boards and floats developed and manufactured as prototypes.

Aeronautical instruments:

Construction plans for certain aeronautical instruments were redesigned by order of the Office of Economic Problems on the basis of war-time types still available. Small lots, of about 50 pieces, were ordered. Instruments found at former armed forces depots were reconditioned to meet target dates (by the end of 1952). Such items included speedometers, altimeters, and magnetic compasses and will be followed by gyroscopic instruments. These instruments were designed and manufactured in separate rooms.

Vacuum furnaces for ceramic items:

An order for elevated vacuum furnaces, valued at 1,000,000 eastmarks, was additionally placed, although this was an entirely nonroutine manufacture for which designs and construction plans were furnished by the Teltow RFT Dralovic plant which used such furnaces for its resistance apparatus. As many as 20 furnaces reportedly were supplied in 1952.

Water counters:

Production of water counters was nearing an end and was scheduled to be assigned to the Mechanik-Gaselau plant in Berlin.

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